

Committee to also pursue a policy and environmental approach to addressing obesity. Last year, AHA released a scientific statement entitled Population-Based Prevention of Obesity: The Need for Comprehensive Promotion of Healthful Eating, Physical Activity, and Energy Balance (See Attachment B). We believe this statement may be of use to the Committee.

Nutrient Density/Discretionary Calories

Nutrient Density

Consumers should focus on the consumption of nutrient-dense calories that meet the Dietary Guidelines. To do this, individuals should consume a variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products; choose fat-free and low-fat dairy products, legumes, poultry, and lean meats; and eat fish, preferably oily fish, twice a week. The recommendations should be specific for the types of nutrient-dense foods that should be consumed, and emphasize the need to limit consumption of high calorie foods with low nutritional value such as sugars and saturated and *trans* fats.

Discretionary Calories

The concept of discretionary calories is difficult to understand. While discretionary calories provide beneficial flexibility in the diet, people do not understand discretionary calories limits. In order for individuals to have discretionary calories available, they must limit foods of low nutritional value and caloric intake must be in balance with caloric expenditure.

Unfortunately the majority of the American population is too sedentary and they do have discretionary calories to burn. The recommendations should continue to emphasize this point and the Committee should explore new ways to make the discretionary calories concept more consumer-friendly.

Evidence-Based Review Process

AHA applauds the use of the new Nutrition Evidence Library in the development in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines. The Nutrition Evidence Library will be a valuable resource to the Advisory Committee and will ensure that the dietary recommendations are based on a comprehensive scientific review. We commend the USDA and HHS for bringing the process to this level of scientific rigor.

Other

Development Process

The development of the Dietary Guidelines occurs in three stages: first, the Advisory Committee prepares a report of recommendations; second, USDA and HHS jointly develop a Policy Document of key recommendations based on the Advisory Committee's report and outside comments; and third, USDA and HHS develop messages to communicate the Dietary Guidelines to the public.

AHA understands that once the first stage is completed – the Advisory Committee submits its scientific recommendations to USDA and HHS – the Committee is disbanded. It is our further